

EPI Update for Friday, July 1, 2011

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Cattle plague eradicated**
- **Precautions to protect patients in extreme heat**
- **Ten greatest achievements in public health**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Cattle plague eradicated

Rinderpest (which means 'cattle plague' in German) has become the second disease, behind smallpox, to be eradicated from the face of the earth. Eradication is the result of centuries of efforts to prevent illness and outbreaks around the world. Rinderpest is a Morbillivirus that is immunologically related to canine distemper, peste des petits, and the human measles virus. Although difficult to accurately quantify, it is estimated that this disease has caused hundreds of millions of animal deaths throughout history. The most virulent strains killed up to 95 percent of infected herds. Despite being a disease strictly found in animals, its historic impact on humans is indisputably significant. Rinderpest outbreaks have preceded famines in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The disease has also been associated with the fall of the Roman Empire, conquests of Genghis Khan and Charlemagne, and the French and Russian Revolutions. In the coming weeks, CADE will include a series of articles in the EPI Update highlighting the historical significance of this eradication success.

Precautions to protect patients in extreme heat

As we move into what are typically the hottest months of the year in Iowa, please remind patients to take measures to prevent heat stress.

Anyone can suffer from heat stress, including young and healthy individuals if they are very active during hot weather or the heat index is very high; however, the following people are at greatest risk:

- Individuals age 65 or older
- Infants and young children
- Overweight individuals
- People who are performing manual labor or exercising outdoors
- People who are physically ill, especially those with heart disease or high blood pressure, or who take certain medications, such as those for depression, insomnia, or poor circulation

Remind patients to keep cool and use common sense when temperatures and humidity are high by:

- Keeping in the shade or air conditioned areas as much as possible
- Increasing fluid intake, regardless of their activity level

- If experiencing a lot of sweating, replacing salt and minerals by eating foods like bananas and salty crackers, or drink rehydrating beverages that contain salts such as sports drinks, and special rehydration fluids
- Choosing lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing and wear sunscreen
- Wearing hats that shade their face such as sun hats, visors, etc.
- Working slowly if they are not used to working or exercising in heat and humidity. Stop immediately if they get dizzy, nauseated, or feel weak. Go into an air conditioned space and drink cool liquids
- Using a buddy system. Watch others for heat-induced illness, since some people may not realize that they are suffering heat-related illnesses and can become confused or lose consciousness.

For additional information on heat stress visit

www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/ or
www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp.

Ten greatest achievements in public health

Achievement #5 – Motor Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are among the top ten causes of death for U.S. residents of all ages. From 2000 to 2009 the death rate and the injury rate declined; the number of pedestrian deaths among children declined by 49 percent and the number of bicyclist deaths declined by 58 percent.

These successes are the result of safer vehicles, safer roadways, and safer road use. Forty-nine states have enacted seat belt laws for adults and all 50 states have enacted laws that protect children riding in vehicles.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

The State of Weight in Iowa: Tools for Communities to Address Obesity

The Iowa Public Health Association and Wellmark Foundation are collaborating to offer a conference aimed at addressing and preventing obesity. The conference will be held in Des Moines on Wednesday, September 28, 2011.

For more information visit www.iowapha.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1066404.

Have a healthy, happy week (and safe holiday)!

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